THE LADY OF THE LAKE

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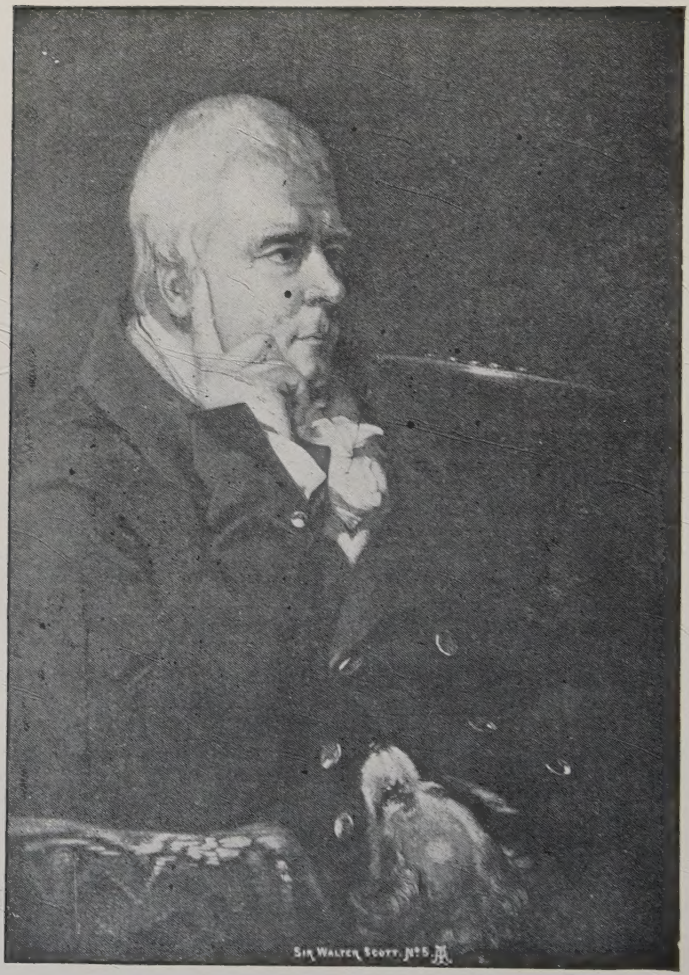
SIR WALTER SCOTT. Nº 5.

SCOTT'S

LADY OF THE LAKE

ADAPTED AND SIMPLIFIED FOR
USE IN SCHOOLS

BY

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PREFACE.

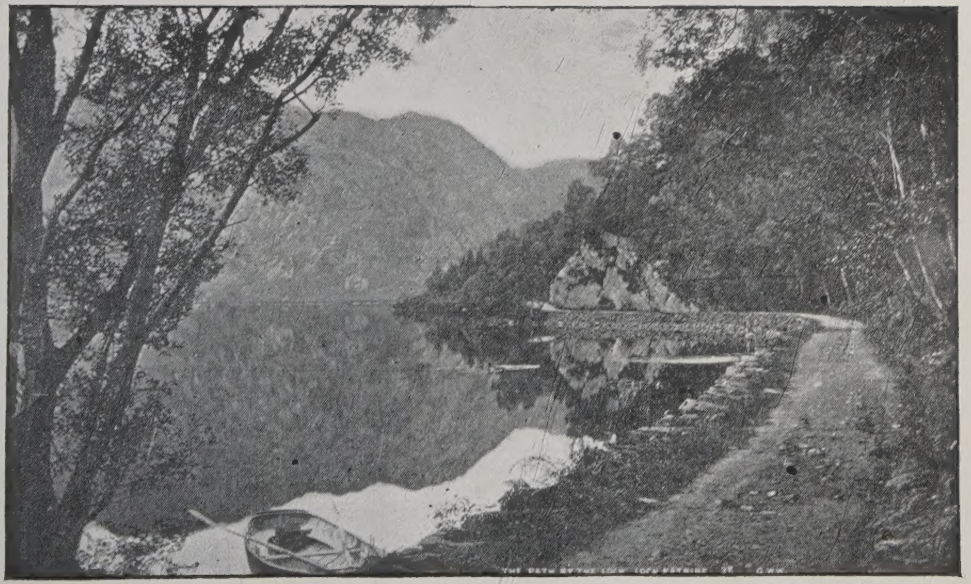
Because of the tendency to set "The Lady of the Lake" earlier in the prescribed courses for English study, the present prose edition has been prepared. The book is intended to familiarize children in grades between the fifth and the eighth with the characters in the poem, to reveal the plot, and to trace the incidents that further plot.

Pains has been taken to preserve, so far as possible, the vocabulary of the original text, to give a suggestion, if no more, of the great poet's power in vivid word picturing, and thus to prepare for the later intensive reading of the poem itself. This preparation will be welcomed by all teachers who expect to teach ninth year English, since the poem has been placed one year earlier in the New York Syllabus given for the five years following 1900.

The book is offered to teachers and to superintendents as one of a graded series, and not as a supplementary reader. That children love to exercise their newly acquired power in the interpretation of symbols upon wholes, has been proven repeatedly, and never more conclusively than in the success of teachers in reading with children, "Black Beauty," or the little classic, "The Dog of Flanders,"* which precedes in the present series "The Prose Lady of the Lake."

S. D. J.

* Educational Publishing Company, Boston, Mass.



THE PATH BY THE LOCH, LOCH KATRINE

THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

CHAPTER I.

At the close of day and of the day's chase, a hunter, who had outstripped his companions, found himself alone, yet still following the stag amidst the Scottish scenery to be found in the lake and mountain region of Loch Lomond. With unbated zeal he pressed on. The jaded deer was in full view, and fast on its flying tracks were the hounds. Scarce a spear's length behind, and glorying in what seemed to be easy victory and noble prize, the hunter, expecting the animal to turn at bay, drew his whinyard; but instead, his own exhausted horse stumbled and fell. The impatient rider strove in vain to rouse the noble beast that had fallen to rise no more. Touched with pity and remorse he exclaimed:

"I little thought that the highland eagle should feed on thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed!"

"Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day,
That cost thy life my gallant gray."

At the sound of their master's horn resounding through the dell, the hounds crest-fallen, returned to his side. The bewildered traveler could find no pathway leading from the glen. The mountain sides were bathed in purple, and each flinty spire of the cathedral-like cliffs was gilded with the rays of the setting sun; but not a beam pierced the dark ravines. In the gathering night, the rocky summits took the form of turret, dome, or battlement; of cupola, of minaret, of pagoda, or mosque. At their base clustered the hawthorn and eglantine, the fox-glove and night shade. Above hung the gray birch and the trembling aspen; higher still were the ash and oak, and crowning all the pine tree stood.

Climbing to the highest projecting rock, the stranger

beheld spread before him Loch Katrine, one sheet of liquid gold, and the whole scene like a dream of fairy-land. High on the south was Benvenue, and on the north, Benan. Fearing to pass the night on the mountain, and knowing that he had enemies near, he twice wound his horn, hoping to recall some straggling friend of the morning's hunting train. Scarce had he blown the bugle note, when at the sound, there darted from a rocky island near a little skiff guided by a woman's hand. Swiftly and gracefully the boat swept the wave until it touched the pebbly beach. The hunter stood concealed, viewing this lovely "Lady of the Lake," who paused to catch again the distant strain of the winding horn.

Never was picture more enchanting. With head upraised, eye and ear intent, and lips apart, listening she stood like a guardian Naiad of the strand. Never did Greek chisel carve a nobler figure, or more beautiful face. In every line of form and dress was displayed the chieftain's daughter; the silken plaid fastened with

the rich brooch, the luxuriant ringlets bound by the satin snood, the warmly tinted cheeks glowing with life, the guileless dark eyes beaming with love. Impatient at the silence, "Father!" she cried; but echo alone answered the sweet sound. Less resolutely she called:

"Malcolm, was thine the blast?"

Scorning to remain longer in concealment, and advancing from the shade of the hazel copse, the huntsman said:

"Fair lady, it was I, a stranger, who blew the blast you heard."

The maid, alarmed, swiftly pushed her light shallop from the shore; but when at a safe distance, she turned and glanced at the stranger. Reassured by the stately manner, the manly form, the courtly words, and honest eye, she listened to his words of explanation, and when he told of the unhappy ending of the day's chase, she replied:

"Our highland hills are open still,
To wildered wanderers of the hill."

Nor are you unexpected at our island home. Last night, Allan-bane, the gray haired minstrel of our family, foretold your visit. He saw in a vision your dappled steed, dead beneath the birches; he described your form and face, your suit of Lincoln green, your cap and sword, even the hounds at your side. He bade all be made ready to receive a guest of high degree. I scarcely believed him, and thought it was my father's horn echoing over the Lake."

The stranger bowed low, at her invitation took a seat in the fairy frigate, and begged the privilege of playing the part of boatman. The hounds sprang into the water, and with heads erect and whimpering cry, they followed the flying shallop, until it rested once more on the beach of the rocky isle. When landed on the shore, the guest was led to a rustic bower, framed by chieftain for hour of danger. It was an ample lodge, strongly built. Oak, ash, pine, heather, moss and clay, overgrown with clematis and ivy combined to make a structure at once elegant and rude.

At the doorway, the fair Ellen gaily to the stranger said:

"On heaven and on thy lady call,
And enter our enchanted hall."

As together they crossed the threshold, an angry clashing of steel was heard. The startled visitor remained for a moment riveted to the spot, but blushed at his own needless alarm, when he saw the cause of the sound, — a naked sword fallen from its sheath. Together they entered a large hall, hung with trophies of the fight or chase; the battle-axe, the hunting spear, the broadsword, the bow, the arrow hung from antlers of elk or deer; the fur of otter, seal, wolf, wildcat, and bear, covering wall and floor, gave to the room an appearance of savage splendor.

The wondering stranger gazed upon the rude and uncouth grandeur, then raising the fallen weapon, he said:

"I never knew but one whose arm could wield a weapon such as this."

His fair companion sighing answered:

"It is my father's sword. In his hand it is as light as a hazel wand in mine. He is now absent, and only aged servants and weak women guard the hall."

At this moment a lady of mature years, but queenly manner, entered, and according to the custom of the time and country, welcomed the guest, though she knew neither his name nor his rank. The stranger, after the banquet given, according to the custom, alike to friend or foe, related the circumstances by which he was made their guest.

Unasked, he announced himself the Knight of Snowdoun, James Fitz-James. Anxiously he hoped to learn the name of his fair hostess. That the ladies were nobly born and gently bred, no one who looked upon them could doubt, and the brave knight wondered to find such grace and beauty in so rude a home. The elder, Lady Margaret, mother of Roderick Dhu, and guardian to the motherless Lady Ellen Douglas, was silent upon all topics that might reveal their name or title.

Unwilling to offend so noble a guest, playfully the maiden fair replied to all inquiry:

"Weird women we! by dale and down,
We dwell afar from tower and town;
We stem the floods, we ride the blast;
On wandering knights our spell we cast.
While unseen minstrels touch the string
'Tis thus our charmed rhymes we sing."

Then she sang accompanied by an unseen harper:

"Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows no breaking;
Dream of battle fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
Fairy strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.

Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting dreams no more:
Sleep the sleep that knows no breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

"No rude sound shall reach thy ear,
Armor's clang, or war steed champing,
Trump or pibroch summon here
Mustering clan, or squadron tramping.
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
At the daybreak from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow.
Ruder sounds shall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here.

Pausing a moment, she concluded the song with lines improvised to suit the occasion. As the sweet music fell from the lovely lips, the brave knight was filled with a tender admiration.

"Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveille.

Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying;

Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen
How thy gallant steed lay dying.

Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye,
Here no bugles sound revéille."

At the last note, the great hall was cleared, and the stranger was left to rest on his bed of heather, pulled fresh and fragrant from the moorland. In his broken sleep, images flitted through his dreams. Friends and foes, phantoms of the night, trouped through the weary brain and at length he thought himself walking with the fair Ellen in a grove; but the vision changed and it seemed to be the iron gauntlet of a hated Douglas, grim and gray, that clasped his hand. Arising, he sought the midnight air, and walked in the moonlight, wondering why the fallen sword so resembled that of his bitter enemy; and why the eyes of Ellen were those of the exiled Douglas. Soon, however, the fragrant balm of the forest, the perfume of the rose and broom cast

their drowsy fragrance, and Scotland's weary king slept until morning dawned on royal guest and Benvenue.

Later in the day, the knight took leave of his gentle hostess. A little bark carried him across the lake, while Allan-bane, the white-haired minstrel with strains of music, and "The Lady of the Lake," by her sweet adieu, sped the parting guest. The harper sang:

"Not faster yonder rowers' might
Flings from their oars the spray,
Not faster yonder rippling bright,
That tracks the shallop's course in light,
Melts in the lake away,
Than men from memory erase
The benefits of former days;
Then, stranger, go! good speed the while,
Nor think again of lonely isle.

"High place to thee in royal court,
High place in battle line,
Good hawk and hound for sylvan sport,
Where beauty sees the brave resort,

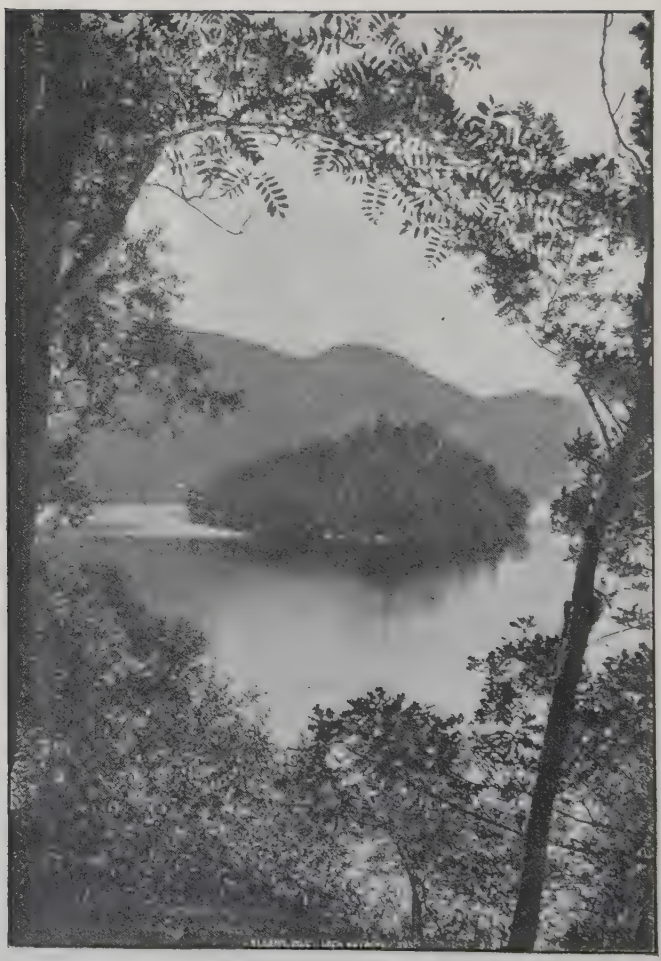
The honor'd meed be thine!
True be thy sword, thy friend sincere,
Thy lady constant, kind, and dear,
And lost in love and friendship's smile
Be memory of the lonely isle.

"But if beneath yon southern sky
A plaided stranger roam,
Whose drooping crest and stifled sigh,
And sunken cheek and heavy eye,
Pine for his Highland home;
Then, warrior, then be thine to show
The care that soothes a wanderer's woe;
Remember then thy hap ere while,
A stranger in the lonely isle.

"Or if on life's uncertain main
Mishap shall mar thy sail;
If faithful, wise and brave in vain,
Woe, want, and exile thou sustain
Beneath the fickle gale;
Waste not a sigh on fortune changed,
On thankless courts, or friends estranged,

But come where kindred worth shall smile,
To greet thee in the lonely isle."

As the sounds died upon the wave, the shallop had reached the opposite side of the lake. The minstrel leaned against a blighted oak, and Ellen smiled to see Snowdoun's knight, from the other shore, cast one lingering look behind. The rose deepened on her cheek, as she gave the last salute. To the knightly heart the mute farewell carried a fatal message. From that moment, she was dearer to him than the fairest and noblest of his own proud court.



ELLEN'S ISLE, LOCH KATRINE

CHAPTER II.

Wishing to destroy the spell cast upon her, and to drive far away thoughts of any save her own absent and true love, Malcolm Græme, she besought Allan-Bane to arouse from his moody dream and to pour forth a stream of music in honor of the noble name of Græme. In vain the minstrel tried to draw from the harp a joyful strain, but the response was still a note of woe. In grief and pain Allan replied, "Dear Lady, the harp sounded thus when thy mother died, and again when thy father, the noble Douglas was exiled. Now I fear these wails of woe mean aught but good to thee and to thy father." Ellen answered:

"These are but the fears of age; there is little ground for alarm now. We are safe though in hiding; we are happy though in exile. My father is a Douglas great in virtue, though deprived of lands and lordship. For myself, I can scarce recall those departed, splendid

days; I am as proud of this mountain flower worn in my hair as of a coronet."

Her smile, her speech, her winsome way, beguiled the old harper to a happier mood, yet he continued:

"My lady, loveliest and best, little thou knowest the rank and honor lost by thy father's exile. Thy place should be in Stirling's Court, thy father's at the side of Scotland's king. All rank, all honor, should be thine and his."

"Fair dreams are these," Ellen cried, not without a shade of sadness, "but to me this mossy rock is dearer than royal chair and canopy. My step would not more gladly tread the courtly dance, than now it springs on green sward and by the mountain side; and as for suitors, does not Roderick Dhu, Clan Alpine's pride, own the sway of my conquering eye?"

The old bard raised his hand as if to repress her mirth, while he cried:

"It is an ill theme thou hast chosen for a jest. None ever yet named with a smile Roderick, the outlaw.

Child, thy mood restrain! It is too true that thou mightest lead this lion, black Roderick, by a silken thread, but it is also true that thy father owes to him almost life, and thy present safety. Disowned by every man of his own rank, the noble Douglas is under the deepest debt to this marauding chief, who looks for his reward in thy hand."

"Minstrel," the maid replied, while all the spirit of a Douglas flashed from her eye, "my debts to the house of Roderick, well I know. His mother, Lady Margaret, has given me more than a mother's care, and all of a mother's love, since the day her sister died and left me motherless. To Sir Roderick, who shields my father from the anger of Scotland's King, I owe a deeper, a holier debt, and I would gladly repay it with my blood, my life, — but never with my hand. I would rather rove an outcast and a beggar, than wed the man I cannot love." She paused a moment and added:

"I do not deny that he is brave and generous, that he is true to his friends and liberal to his clan; though

he has fought for my father, I cannot clasp the hand that is red with the blood of slaughtered peasantry. I shudder at his frown, and if a Douglas could know fear, I should tremble at his smile. Let us change so unpleasant a theme. What do you think of our stranger guest?"

"What think I of him? I would he had never set foot on rocky isle. At his approach, your father's battle sword leaped from its scabbard. That alone would prove him a secret enemy. He may be a spy, he may be a foe; but if neither, what will the jealous Roderick say when he learns a courtly guest has been harbored here? Do you remember his anger when once you led the dance with Malcolm Graeme? But hark! What sounds are these?"

Far up the lake were four barges, fully manned and bearing towards the lonely isle. As they approached nearer, the banner of Clan Alpine was seen. Pikes, spears, and battle-axes flashed in air. The pibroch was heard louder and louder. The war-pipe ceased, but

lake and hill took up the echo, and a hundred clansmen in praise of their chieftain burst forth in a Boat Song.

"Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances!
Honor'd and bless'd be the ever-green Pine!
Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,
Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line!
Heaven send it happy dew,
Earth lend it sap anew,
Gaily to blossom, and broadly to grow,
While every highland glen
Sends our shout back again,
'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'"

Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by the fountain,
Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade.
When the whirlwind has stripp'd every leaf on the mountain,
The more shall Clan Alpine exult in her shade.
Moor'd in the rifted rock,
Proof to the tempest's shock,
Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow;
Menteith and Breadalbane, then,

Echo his praise again,
'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'"

Roderick's mother, Lady Margaret, followed by her train of maids, joyfully sought the strand, and called Ellen to come and wreathe the victor's brow. The maiden was about to obey reluctantly, when a distant bugle was heard, and turning quickly aside she said, "I hear my father's signal blast, and mine must be the skiff to bring him to the island." Swift as a sunbeam she sprang into her little boat, and the island was left far behind her. She was soon folded in a father's embrace, and sweet words of welcome fell from the daughter's lips; but another was there,—standing aloof was Malcolm Græme. The Douglas kindly placed his hand on Malcolm's shoulder, saying:

"Forgive, my lad, a father's weakness, but the love of a child, or the tear of a friend, is more to me than the homage of lords and knights."

To hide the joy at meeting father and lover, at hearing dear words of praise from fond lips, Ellen turned to

hawk and hound. Well might the lover steal secret glances, as, modest and beautiful, she stood caressed by the hounds and trusted by the hawk.

Tall and slender, in belted plaid and tartan hose, there was never more graceful youth than Malcolm Græme. With a nature ardent, frank, and kind, a love for truth, contempt and scorn for the wrong, written on every feature, he gave promise of a noble manhood.

"Father dear," exclaimed Ellen, "why have you roved so far, and why so late returned? Sadly in this absence we have missed you."

"My child, the chase is my only solace, my only diversion, bereft of that I should be lonely indeed. I met young Malcolm, as I strayed far eastward, and well it was; for royal hunters and horsemen surrounded me on every side, and this noble youth, though a royal ward, risked life and lands to guard me safe through the mountain passes. Roderick shall welcome him, despite their old feud."

At this moment, the chieftain of Clan Alpine came

to greet the Douglas and his fair daughter. A flush of anger overspread the dark brow of the outlaw on seeing Malcolm Græme, whom, nevertheless, he greeted with courtesy. In conversation and games the summer morning passed.

At noon a courier in haste arrived and held a secret conference with the chieftain. That evil tidings had been brought to Roderick was evident, and in deep thought he passed the hour until all assembled for the evening meal. Ill at ease he entered the hall, playing with his dagger's hilt; then raising his eyes from the ground he said:

"The tyrant of the Scottish throne, faithless and ruthless, boasts that he has subdued the borderside; his vindictive pride is leading him here. He pleads that he comes for hunt or chase, but well it is known that no border chieftain whom he meets in his path will be safe. Further, his men, his followers, if not he himself, know of the hiding place of the Douglas."

At these words, the eye of the mother met those

of the maid, and pale with fear, Ellen turned to her father, while the mother sought the side of her son. The color fled from Malcolm's face. The noble Douglas sorrowful, yet undismayed, rose and said :

" Brave Roderick, if this be true, not one hour shall Douglas or his daughter remain to draw the lightning wrath of the king upon thine abode. The royal thunder-bolt will soonest fall where rests this gray head. Poor remnants of the " Bleeding Heart," with Ellen, my child, I will seek refuge in some forest cell, and there, like the hunted deer, we will hide until pursuit is passed."

" No, by mine honor ; while herein I and my good sword remain, you shall not go defenceless from my door. Hear my blunt speech : grant me Ellen, thy daughter, in marriage, and give me your aid in war. A Douglas leagued with Roderick Dhu, will draw allies from every part of Scotland. When the Scotch pipes shall tell our bridal day, terror will seize upon the lord of Stirling Castle. Our nuptial torch shall set on fire a

thousand villages, and send sleep from the eyes of bold King James."

Ellen at his words, dazed, faint, trembling with fear, felt that a yawning abyss opened at her feet; but fearing for her father, she was ready to purchase his safety with her own happiness.

Douglas and Malcolm saw in her face the strife between love and duty, shown in the quivering lip and eye, in the color changing as if from life to death. Then the father cried:

"Enough, Roderick, enough! My daughter cannot be thy bride. Forgive me chief, but you must risk nothing for us. A Douglas will never lift a spear against the king of Scotland. It was I who taught his childish hands to rein his horse, to wield his sword. To his mother I was bound in holy wedlock, and not more dear is my daughter Ellen now, than once was he. I love him still,— despite my wrongs."

The chieftain of Clan Alpine strode through the hall, with darkened brow and wounded pride. Rage and dis-

appointment gave way to the bitterest anguish. It was the death pang of a long cherished love and hope. As Ellen rose to escape the despairing look of the son, and the convulsive sobs of the mother, Malcolm sprang to her side to aid her faltering steps.

Roderick, fierce with jealousy, leaped toward them, exclaiming :

" Back, beardless boy ! Back, minion ! To Douglas and to that fair maid you owe your welcome under this roof."

Like a greyhound, Malcolm closed with his foe. The hand of each gripped at the dagger and the sword. Death had ended the attack, had not Douglas with his giant strength thrust himself between the struggling foes.

" Chieftains, forego ! Madmen, forbear your frantic strife ! Do you forget that it is for the hand of the daughter of a Douglas that you are engaged in this dishonorable broil? Is the family of James of Bothwell fallen so low ? "

Struck with shame, they unclasped the desperate hold. Roderick plunged his sword in its sheath and cried to his henchman :

" Malise, ho ! Conduct this Græme safe from the Rocky Isle. Pity it is that so soft a beardless cheek should be exposed to the midnight air ; but go to your guardian, James the King, and tell him Roderick defies him on lake and on fell."

Young Malcolm, calm and bold, answered :

" The spot graced by Lady Ellen Douglas is safe and sacred, even though it be the haunt of a robber and highwayman. Reserve your churlish courtesy and safe conduct for those who fear to be your foe. These mountain passes are as safe to me at midnight as at noonday. Brave Douglas, lovely Ellen, — naught here will I say. We shall meet again. Chieftain, we too shall find an hour ! "

Old Allan, at the command of Douglas, followed the youth to the lakeside. Here Malcolm rolled his dirk and pouch in his ample plaid, fastened them high on his

shoulders, safe from the dark water, and took leave of the minstrel saying, " Tell Roderick Dhu, I owe him not the poor service of a boat to carry me to yonder mountain side." Then stripped for the venture, he plunged into the tide, keeping his head high above the water In the moonlight, Allan watched the form rising and falling, skimming the stream swift as a bird. When landed on the shore, he gave the loud " Halloo " to tell of his safe arrival.

LOCH KATRINE, FROM RHODERICK DHU'S WATCH TOWER

CHAPTER III.

On the morning following the midnight departure of Malcom Græme from the rocky island, Roderick Dhu declared open warfare upon Scotland's King. At break of day, he paced the strand and watched the rising sun. The summer's dawn had changed the blue of Loch Katrine to amethyst.

"Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kissed the lake, just stirred the trees,
And the pleased lake like maiden coy
Trembled, and dimpled, but not with joy.
The water-lily to the light
Her chalice reared of silver bright;
The doe awoke and to the lawn
Begemmed with dew-drops led the fawn.
The black-bird and the speckled thrush
Goodmorrow gave from every bush;
In answer coo'd the Cushat dove
Her notes of peace, and rest, and love."

No thought of peace, however, no thought of rest, dwelt in the heart of Roderick Dhu. War had been declared, and he thirsted for Saxon blood. With sheathed sword in hand, he paced the border of the lake, at the rock of Benharrow, awaiting the ritual which attended the preparation of the Cross of Fire, the Highland emblem fraught with deep and deathly meaning. Brian, a barefoot hermit priest, clad in gown and hood, stood near. At his side were parts of the oak from which the Cross had been framed.

With outstretched naked hand and arm, he held the slender, divine symbol on high. Even the vassals of Roderick shuddered as they looked upon the savage face and form, less like Christ's priest, than like a Druid released from the grave. The pile of fagots was ready to be fired; the goat to be offered in sacrifice was led forth; and Roderick Dhu's blade was drenched in its life blood. The Cross was still grasped in the clenched hand of Brian, while anathemas were poured forth upon him who should see this symbol and not

hasten to join the gathering clans in dread warfare. While the priest paused, the waiting vassals stepped forward, brandished their swords in air, struck their clattering targes, and raised loud and hoarse, the cry:

"Woe to the traitor, woe!"

A thousand echoes of the dreadful words were heard from the mountain, lake, and fell. Brian, more demon than priest, still hissing curses through his set teeth, now scathed the Cross in fire, and shook its flaming points above the crowd, while the peasant women and children sang:

"Sunk traitor's home in embers red,
And cursed be the meanest shed,
That e'er shall hide the houseless head
We doom to want and woe!"

The hermit now dipped the Crosslet's points of burning wood in the blood of the dying goat, and muttered:

"As this flame is quenched in the gore of the slain goat, may destruction quench the life of all who refuse to follow this Cross of Fire."

The part taken by the hermit in the ritual being ended. the Chieftain impatiently seized the emblem, placed it in the hand of his henchman and cried:

"Speed, Malise, speed!
The muster-place is Lanrick Mead,
The time is now!"

Never did roebuck bound on fleeter foot up the steep braes, over false morass and trembling bog, across brook, and through brake. The crag might be high, the scaur might be deep, yet Malise shrank not from the desperate leap which must carry him to the farther side. With parched lip and burning brow, he kept his flying pace, carrying tidings of danger, war, and death.

Fast as the fatal symbol flew, the tenants of hamlet, hut, glen, and upland, poured a steady stream to Lanrick Mead. The fisherman forsook the stream; the hunter left the stag at bay; the swarthy smith seized dirk and brand; the mower left the scythe in the swath; the plough stood still in the furrow; the herd lowed in the field. Each son of Clan Alpine rushed to arms.

Malise reached Duncraggin's hut, and stood at the door of Duncan, who must now speed on the signal. He burst into the hall of him who, in the battle and the chase, had always stood at the side of Roderick. But what awful accents are heard! It is the funeral wail of women, and Duncan lies on his lowly bier. His widow, his son, the village maids and matrons, sound the dismal coronach.

"He is gone on the mountain,
He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
When our need was the sorest.
The font, reappearing,
From the rain-drops shall borrow,
But to us comes no cheering,
To Duncan no morrow!

The hand of the reaper
Takes the ears that are hoary,
But the voice of the weeper
Wails manhood in glory.
The autumn winds rushing

Waft the leaves that are searest,
But our flower was in flushing,
When blighting was nearest.

Fleet foot on the correi,
Sage counsel in cumber,
Red hand in the foray,
How sound is thy slumber!
Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou art gone, and forever!"

Malise hesitated but a moment, then, unheeding all, thrust the blood besmeared Cross into the hand of the stripling Angus, and cried:

"The muster place is Lanrick Mead,
Speed, clansmen, speed!"

Up sprang the heir of Duncan's line, seized his father's dirk and broad-sword, flew to his mother's side for a last embrace, and pressed on her lips a fond adieu.

"Alas!" she sobbed,—"and yet, begone,
And speed thee forth, like Duncan's son."

The lad cast one look upon the loved form of the dead father, dashed aside the tear, tossed on his bonnet and fled, over moor and moss. As soon as the flying footsteps were heard no more, the true mother gave way to the grief and to the tears a borrowed force had stayed.

On sped young Angus, until he reached the Teith side. The stream was swollen, and the bridge far away. The brave youth paused not, but dashed into the dark waters. The torrent roared, and twice the stripling stumbled where, had he fallen, Duncraggin's orphan had never risen. Firmer he grasped the Cross. until the opposite bank was gained.

Dripping with the flood, and fainting from fatigue, he met the bridal train of young Norman of Armandave. The bride, the lovely Mary, saw the fatal sign thrust into the hand just joined to hers in holy bond. Oh fatal doom! She knows that Clan Alpine's cause is every man's trust. She heard the words:

"Speed, Norman, speed,
The muster place is Landrick Mead."

Quickly Norman laid his plaid aside, and not trusting himself to glance into the eyes so dear, dashed away, hoping to return with the red honors of war on his crest. High resolve and strong feeling burst into song.

SONG.

"The heath this night must be my bed,
The bracken curtain for my head,
My lullaby the warder's tread,
Far, far, from love and thee, Mary;
To-morrow eve, more stilly laid,
My couch may be my bloody plaid,
My vesper song, thy wail, sweet maid!
It will not waken me, Mary!

I cannot, dare not, rancy now
The grief that clouds thy lovely brow,
I dare not think upon thy vow,
And all it promised me, Mary.
No fond regret must Norman know;

When bursts Clan Alpine on the foe,
His heart must be like bended bow,
His foot like arrow free, Mary.

A time will come with feeling fraught,
For, if I fall in battle fought,
Thy hapless lover's dying thought
Shall be a thought on thee, Mary.
And if return'd from conquer'd foes,
How blithely will the evening close,
How sweet the linnet sing repose,
To my young bride and me, Mary!"

At the muster place were met men of all ages and ranks, from the gray sire whose trembling hand could scarce buckle on his sword, to the young lad whose shaft was yet unable to terrify the birds of the mountain. Each valley, each glen, had sent forth all but the babes and the women. The human streams united at Lanrick Mead, all prompt for war, all trained to arms since life began; they met by no law, no oath, bound only by Clansmen's tie, and the command of Roderick Dhu.

THE BOAT HOUSE, LOCH KATRINE

CHAPTER IV.

The morning after the departure of Malcolm Græme from the home of Roderick, Douglas, true to his promise, left Lonely Isle, to hide with his daughter, the fair Ellen, in a dark and lonely grotto in Benvenue, known as the Goblin's Cave. Here they could find safety, for superstition had long prevented the foot of man from entering its shades. It was a wild and weird retreat, yawning upon the mountain side, like a scar on the breast of a warrior, and the roar of the water from the lake when lashed into fury was the only sound to be heard. In such a cove a wolf might first see the light of day; in such a spot the wild cat might bear its young; yet here Douglas, the lovely Ellen, and the minstrel gray, for the time must seek safety.

At evening as the shadows lengthened, Roderick with a few trusted men passed above the Goblin's Cave, on

his way to place his clansmen as guards at the mountain passes. A single page walked beside him bearing his sword; the others had passed on and were awaiting him at the point of meeting. It was an unwonted sight to see Clan Alpine's chief in the rear of his men, but with reluctant step he now lingered on the mountain side near the obscure hiding place of Douglas. Roderick had sworn to drown in the blood of the battle-field his love for Ellen.

"But he who stems a stream with sand,
And fetters flame with flaxen band,
Has yet a harder task to prove,—
By firm resolve to conquer love."

Evening found the chief restlessly haunting the hiding-place of his lost treasure. Listening, he heard accompanied by the harp of Allan-bane, the sweet melting voice of Ellen chanting a hymn to the Virgin.

"Ave Maria! maiden mild!
Listen to a maiden's prayer!
Thou canst hear though from the wild,

Thou canst save amid despair.
Safe we sleep beneath thy care,
Though banish'd, outcast, and reviled—
Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer;
Mother, hear a suppliant child!
Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! undefiled!
The flinty couch we now must share,
Shall seem with down of eider piled,
If thy protection hover there.
The murky cavern's heavy air
Shall breathe a balm if thou hast smiled;
Then, Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer!
Mother list to suppliant child!
Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! stainless styled!
Foul demons of the earth and air,
From this their wonted haunt exiled,
Shall flee before thy presence fair.
We bow us to our lot of care,
Beneath thy guidance reconciled;

Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer,
And for a father hear a child!
Ave Maria!"

The sound of harp and hymn died together, yet Clan Alpine's lord remained motionless, until the page pointed to the declining sun. Then casting his plaid about face and limb, he muttered:

"Never again shall I hear that angel voice."

Down the mountain side he strode, and eastward bent his hasty way to the height above Lanrick Mead. The camping ground made a weird picture. Some of the clansmen sat, some slowly moved about, and many wrapped in tartan, rested on the ground. The points of the spears glowed in the gathering shade, and when high upon the mountain side the Chieftain's plume was seen, a shout of welcome, wild and shrill, went up from lake and fell. Three times it was echoed from the rocky wall, then darkness gathered and silence reigned in the camp.

Young Norman of Armandave standing sentinel in a

pass between the lake and the wood heard a step. Instantly he sprang to the axe and bow, that lay near him, exclaiming:

"Stand or die!"

Then seeing Malise, his friend and clansman, approaching, he changed his tone and manner, and inquired:

"What tidings dost thou bring of the foe?"

Without replying to the query, eagerly the henchman asked:

"Where sleeps the Chief?"

"Apart, in yonder misty glade; I will guide thee to him." Then calling Glentarkin to take the place of sentinel, together they hastened up the pass.

"What of the foeman?" again Norman anxiously asked.

"Reports vary, but it is certain that for two days an army has been ready to march upon us. The king himself, however, is not with his soldiers. He is holding a princely revelry at Stirling Castle. We must expect the battle soon. Warriors may bear it, but what will become of the unprotected women and children?"

"Roderick has caused all aged men, all maids and matrons, mothers and children to repair to the Lonely Isle? All boats, all shallops have been removed that there may be neither entrance to their safe abode, nor egress from it."

"A plan well-advised, and worthy the man who is leader of the noble tribe of Clan Alpine. But why does our chief rest apart from his followers?"

"Last night Brian the hermit consulted an oracle, only approached in time of greatest extremity. A snow-white bull was slain, and within its reeking hide the hermit was wrapped and placed on the rocky cliff called the Hero's Targe. There he spent the night, and Roderick rested near. The wizard in his grewsome robe awaited the prophetic words which should foretell the events of war."

"Hark! see! the hermit joins Roderick."

Silence fell upon the two young men, while the hermit held solemn converse with Alpine's lord.

"This has been a fearful night. For you, Roderick, I

have borne the harrowing anguish of seeing the curtain of the future world unfurled. The shapes that sought my awful couch may never be described by human tongue. No man, truly mortal, had survived to say he saw the scene which I beheld, before the blazing scroll was revealed to my sunken eyeballs. The fateful answer branded on my soul is in the following words :

> " Which spills the foremost foeman's life,
> That party conquers in the strife."

" Thanks, Brian, for thy zeal and care. The augury is good. In battle the sword of Clan Alpine has always tasted first the blood of the foe. Further, a sure victim has offered himself to the auspicious blow. A spy in the disguise of a hunter is near us, appearing upon my land this morning ; but the evening is distant that shall witness his return. My followers guard every pass. Red Murdock, who has been bribed to be his guide, will lead him into some deep path where will be those to bring the intruder, though it be the king

himself, to death. Ha! Malise, what tidings of the foe?"

"At Doune, my liege, I saw two nobles bearing their banners, with many a spear and glaive. One wore the silver star of Moray; the other was the Earl of Mar."

"High tidings these, good Malise; I love to hear of worthy foes. When move they upon us?"

"To-morrow's noon will see them here prepared for battle."

"Then shall it see a stern meeting. Didst thou hear aught of the friendly clans of Earn? Strengthened by them, we well might meet the foe on Benledi's side. If not, Clan Alpine's hosts shall man the Trosachs, and will fight in the gorge of Loch Katrine, in the sight of the helpless maids and matrons. Each will fight for his house and hearth, father for child, son for sire, lover for maid!"

Turning aside, Roderick to himself said:

"Is it the breeze that dims mine eye, or is it an ill-omened tear, a messenger of doubt and defeat? No!

Terror cannot pierce the heart of Vich Alpine. It is as sturdy as his trusted targe."

Instantly he sprang among his men, exclaiming:

"Each to his post! All know their charge."

Obedient to the chieftain, the pibroch sounded, the bands advanced, the broadswords gleamed, and the banners fluttered in the breeze.

LOCH LOMOND AND BEN LOMOND

CHAPTER V.

Morning rose on the cave in the side of the mountain, where Ellen, unattended except by the aged harper, sat by the old gray stone. Sad was the heart of the young girl in this hour of peril. Douglas had gone, the loving daughter feared, but knew not whither.

Allan strove in vain to quiet her alarm, and to comfort her by words of cheer concerning the speedy return of so devoted a father, who, he assured her, had gone to prepare a safe abode for them all. Sadly she replied:

"No, Allan, no! my father gave me his parting blessing, in words and tones unmistakable. The tear stood in his eye, — in the eye of Douglas, when he said:

"'If not on earth we meet in heaven.' Why, if he is to return, did he bid me hasten to the protection of the convent of Kenneth-Cambus? I am sure he has gone to Scotland's King, to purchase with his own life the liberty of Malcolm Græme."

"Dear lady, change that look of woe, or you will break the heart of him who would serve you. List to my harp."

"I will listen, but forbid me not the relief of tears."

SONG.

"Merry it is in the good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle are singing,
When the deer sweeps by and the hounds are in cry,
And the hunter's horn is ringing.

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good greenwood,
So blithe Lady Alice is singing;
On the beech's pride, and on oak's brown side,
Lord Richard's axe is ringing.

Why sounds yon stroke on beech and oak,
Our moonlight circles screen?
Or who comes here to chase the deer,
Beloved of our Elfin Queen?

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good greenwood,
Though the birds have stilled their singing;

The evening blaze doth Alice raise,
And Richard is fagots bringing.

'Tis merry, 'tis merry in fairy land,
When lively birds are singing,
When the court doth ride by their monarch's side
With bit and bridle ringing.

Merry it is in good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle are singing,
But merrier they in Dunfermlin gray,
When all the bells were ringing."

As the minstrel ceased, a stranger clad in a hunting suit of Lincoln green was seen climbing the steep mountain side. His martial step, his stately manner, his eagle glance, called to mind the visitor at Lonely Isle,—James Fitz-James.

Ellen, as in a dream, saw the knight approach, then starting from her seat exclaimed, "O stranger! in this hour of terror, what dire misfortune to you or to me has brought you here?"

"It can be no dire misfortune, gentle lady, that permits me to look once more upon so fair a face. My former guide has brought me safe over the mountain pass, over bank and over bourne. It was a charmed way, for it has led me to the Lady Ellen."

"A charmed path indeed! Said he naught of war, of battle, of guarded pass? Nothing of the gathered tribes of Roderick Dhu?"

"No; and, by my faith, I saw nothing that portended danger."

Turning to Allan, Ellen exclaimed:

"O Allan! hasten to the guide; I see he wears the tartans of Roderick's clan. Learn from him his purpose and bind him to solemn promise of safe guidance for Snowdoun's Knight. Why, oh! rash but noble guest, have you dared to take this wild chance?"

"Sweet and dear must be the life for which, lovely lady, you show such deep concern; yet I have ever held life but an idle gift, when weighed with love or honor. Let me then speak my purpose at once. I came to bear

you far from this wild and dangerous spot. No flower so fair can live in land so rude. By this hand, I wish to lead you from these scenes of strife and war. My strong black steed waits near, with a snow white palfrey for you; they will bear us safe to the gates of Stirling Castle. There I will place you in the lovely bower you were born to grace, care for you most tenderly, and defend your honor by giving you my name."

"Speak not thus, Sir Knight! It would be infamy to wed with me. My father is the Douglas, an outlaw; a price is set by the king upon his head." We are outlawed, exiles, under ban! Nay — speak not James Fitz-James — I must tell thee all. There is a noble youth,— if yet he live,— exposed to death for me and mine! Him alone, I love. 'Now thou hast all the secrets of my heart, — forgive, be generous, and leave me to my hopeless love and helpless misery.'

Fitz-James read truth and determination in every word and every gesture He knew it were only to give idle pain and to lose valuable time to stay longer.

Before him Ellen stood, her mantling cheek telling the effort it had cost to disclose her love for another, and to make known her father's peril. Hope vanished from Fitz James's eye; sympathy took its place, and he offered to guide her to a place of safety as would a brother. To this Ellen replied:

"Oh! little thou knowest the heart of Roderick Dhu. Haste thee and learn from Allan whether thou mayest trust thy guide."

With his hand upon his forehead as if to quiet the conflict, he rose to depart, then turning, he paused, and said:

"Dear lady, yet a parting word. The life of Scotland's king was once preserved by my sword. In return the monarch gave me this ring, and bade me demand what I wished at any time, saying if the request were accompanied by this signet, all would be granted. Ellen, the ring is thine,— let me place it on the fair hand; it shall secure thy way. Each guard, each usher knows the sign. Since thou wilt not fly with me, seek

thou the king without delay, and with him plead the cause of father and of lover. On her finger he placed the circlet, paused, kissed the hand, and was gone."

The aged minstrel stood aghast, watching the stranger, whom he well knew to be King James, join the guide, and hastily disappear down the mountain side.

CHAPTER VI.

As Fitz James, or the king, passed with his guide through the Trosachs, all was quiet. "Noontide was sleeping on the hill," when suddenly the guide whooped loud and long.

"Murdoch," exclaimed the knight, "was that a signal cry?"

The guide stammered, "I shout to scare the ravens from their dainty fare."

Too well the knight of Snowdoun knew the raven's prey,— it was his own gallant steed.

"Murdoch," he said, "move in advance,— but silently. Whistle or whoop again, and thou shalt die!"

Sullenly they walked on, each upon his guard.

As the path led now here, now there, they saw standing by a cliff, a worn and wasted woman clad in tattered widow's weeds. Her brow was bound with gaudy

broom, and with wild gestures she waved a plume of feathers from the wing of an eagle. Her restless look was fixed upon the wood, the rock, the sky, but when her eyes fell upon the Lowland dress of Snowdoun's Knight she shrieked till all the rocks replied. She wept, she wrung her hands, and then wildly sang :

Song.

"They bid me sleep, they bid me pray,
They say my brain is warped and wrung;
I cannot sleep on Highland brae,
I cannot pray in Highland tongue
But were I now where Allan glides,
Or heard my native Devan tides,
So sweetly would I rest and pray
That heaven would close my wintry day;
'Twas thus my hair they bid me braid,
They made me to the church repair,
It was my bridal morn they said,
And my true love would meet me there.
But woe betide the cruel guile
That drowned in blood the morning smile!"

"Who is this woman and what is the meaning of this wild song?"

"It is Blanche of Devan," replied Murdoch, "a crazed, Lowland maid, taken captive on the morn she was married. The bridegroom made resistance and Roderick Dhu, her captor, slew him before the eyes of the bride. Hence, yon brain-sick fool." Murdoch raised his bow.

"Stop!" exclaimed Fitz James. If you strike her, I will pitch you from these cliffs."

"Thanks, my noble lord, thanks," exclaimed the maniac; "I love to turn once more my poor sad eyes upon the Lowland dress, and to hear the Lowland tongue, for I am a Lowland lass." Again she sang:

"The toils are pitched, and the stakes are set,
Ever sing merrily, merrily;
The bows they bend, and the knives they whet,
Hunters live so cheerily."

Fitz James's mind was passion-tossed. Blanche in her song hinted at fears, which suspicion of Murdoch con-

firmed. Was he being lured to death by a treacherous guide?

He strode to the side of Murdoch, waved his sword on high and exclaimed:

"Disclose thy treachery, or die!"

Murdoch sprang away like a deer, but in his race drew his bow and aimed it at the breast of the knight. The shaft missed its intended victim, and fell buried in the heart of Blanche. But he who would flee from Snowdoun's knight would need fleeter foot than is given any of the Clan of Alpine. With heart of fire and foot of wind, the fierce avenger gained upon the fleeing knave. The fiery Saxon gained at each bound, and with his sword pinned the treacherous wretch to the earth. With foot and hand, he drew the sword from the villain's dying body, and then turned to the poor bleeding girl, whose death was near.

She sat upright, and had drawn the fatal shaft from her breast. The knight vainly sought to stay the flow of blood.

"Stranger, it is vain," said the dying girl. "This hour of death has given me my reason, and will restore me to the lover who years ago was murdered before mine eyes. Take this little tress of yellow hair and swear to me by thy knighthood's honored sign, and by my life which has preserved yours, that when you meet him who boasts himself Chief of Alpine's Clan, that you will avenge the wrongs of poor Blanche of Devan. They watch for thee by pass and fell — beware,— I die — farewell —"

Fitz James saw the murdered girl die.

"God be my help in time of need, for I shall wreak vengeance for this crime upon Clan Alpine's Chief!"

Then taking a tress of fair hair from the head of the dead girl, and blending it with that of the murdered bridegroom, he placed it on the side of his bonnet.

"By Him whose word is truth, I swear,
No other favor will I wear,
Till this sad token I imbue,
In the best blood of Roderick Dhu."

But hark! what is the loud cry he hears? The chase is up! They seek Fitz-James, who, now driven from the known and guarded way, began anew his journey through copse and over cliff. Often he was obliged to change his path, driven back by stream and precipice. Fatigued, disheartened, and faint for want of food and loss of strength, he threw himself upon the turf. Like blood-hounds, the men of Roderick could be heard in their wild search for "the spy," as they named him who had slain Red Murdoch. The shout, the shrill whistle, could be plainly heard, and the knight knew to go farther into the forest would be but to fall into the hands of the enemy.

The shades of night fell fast, and hid the form of the wanderer from the watchful eye of the foe. When the gloom covered his movements, with cautious step, he began again to climb the crags. Every breeze on the mountain benumbed his limbs. In dread, in danger, famished, and chilled, he journeyed on, when suddenly upon turning a rocky point, he came upon a watch-fire

brightly burning. Beside its clear, bright embers, wrapped in his plaid, lay a mountaineer who, springing from his warm bed, demanded:

"Thy name and purpose! Saxon, stand!"

"A stranger," replied the knight.

"What dost thou require?"

"Rest, warmth, food, and a guide. My life is beset; I have lost my way, and my limbs are stiff with cold."

"Art thou a friend to Roderick Dhu?"

"No."

"Darest thou declare thyself his foe?"

"I dare; to him, to you, and to all his band."

"Your words are bold, Sir Knight, and whoever has said that you are a secret spy, has lied. No spy ever used such words as yours."

"Lie they do, by heaven! Set before me Roderick Dhu, with any of the two boldest of his men, and I will write the lie on their crest."

"Enough, enough, sit down and share a soldier's bed, a soldier's fare. I see your spurs and belt, and by these

tokens, I trust your honor, as you must mine. I am your host; you are my guest."

He then gave food, plain though it was. More fuel was thrown upon the fire, and the Saxon was invited to share the plaid of the mountaineer. In every respect the stranger was made welcome.

"Bold Knight, I am to Roderick Dhu clansman and kinsman. Each word spoken against his honor demands from me redress. Yet more,— upon thy fate will depend the issue of the impending battle. You are a Saxon, and I of Clan Alpine. When war was declared, an augur was consulted, and the fateful words pronounced by him were:

> "Which spills the foremost foeman's life,
> That party conquers in the strife."

Were I now to wind my horn, men from my clan would quickly overpower you; or I might command you to rise worn as you are by fatigue and defend yourself, sword to sword. But, no! not for clan or kindred will

I depart from honor's laws. To assail a wearied foe were shame, and the word "stranger" is sacred. In that name you asked food, fire, rest, and guidance. Rest till dawn, when I will in safety conduct you beyond the lines of Clan Alpine. There, at Coilantogle Ford, you must draw sword and fight for your king, as I will for my chief."

"Your courtesy is accepted as freely as it is given."

With this agreement for the morrow, the two foemen lay down peacefully side by side like brothers, and slept till the morning light was shed upon mountain and stream.

CHAPTER VII.

The red light of the morning sun roused the warriors. The fire was stirred, the rude meal eaten. Throwing his plaid gracefully about him, the Gael, true to his promise, led the way to the Ford. By thicket green, by mountain gray, they wound along the brow of the precipice, which commanded the rich scenes beneath. They saw the windings of the Forth and of the Teith, and all the valley that lies between. Fitz-James with tender glance saw far away the turrets of Stirling Castle.

At length they came where the mountain is most stern and steep. Here Vennachar winds its silver stream and Benledi rises ridge on ridge. The path became so narrow and dangerous, that the guide slackened his pace and led slowly through the jaws of the pass. Turning to his companion, he asked by what strange

accident he had attempted to cross these wilds without a pass from Roderick, the Chief of the Highlands.

"Brave Gael, my pass, in danger tried, hangs at my belt. Three days since, however, when I came here in search of game, all seemed as peaceful as the mist slumbering on yonder hill."

"Yet why didst thou come a second time to these grounds?"

"Are you a warrior, and ask me why? Slight cause will often draw the step of a knight. A falcon lost, a greyhound strayed, danger itself is often cause enough."

"Keep thy secret,— I urge thee not. But hast thou not heard of the Lowland war, led by the Earl of Mar?"

"No! By my word of honor. I had heard that bands were prepared to guard the sports of King James, yet, I doubt not that when they hear of the rising of Clan Alpine, their pennons will be flung to the breeze."

"Free be they flung! Too long have their silken folds been food for moth, and just as free will float the pine plume of Vich Alpine. But, stranger, since you

came into this land a peaceful gamester, why are you now the avowed foe of Roderick Dhu?"

"But yester-noon, I knew naught of thy Chieftain, save as an outlaw and desperate man, who in Holy Rood Castle, in the sight of his regent, ran a dagger through the heart of a belted knight."

At these words the brow of the guide grew dark, and pausing a moment he asked:

"And heardest thou why? Heardst thou the shameful word and blow that called forth the vengeance of Roderick Dhu? A man should right a wrong where it is received, though that were in the courts of Heaven."

"What thinkest thou then of thy Chieftain's life, wrenching from every Lowlander his cattle and his grain? You are too noble not to scorn foray such as this."

The Gael glanced darkly at his companion, and said:

"Saxon, dare you to me, a Highlander, speak of plunder and robbery? Who drove the poor Gael to the Highlands? Who pent men, women and children in

the fortresses of these mountain fastnesses? The Saxons were robbers, before the founders of the family of Roderick Dhu had ever seen the light of day. Talk not to me of Saxon honor. Is it wrong to spoil the spoiler, to wrest prey from a highwayman? The mountain chiefs, the noble Gaels, fight only for land taken by the dishonorable Saxon. Sir Knight, seek other cause against Roderick Dhu."

"Let it pass; I will not now seek fresh cause for enmity, to cloud thy brow. Let it be enough that I have promised to fight thee hand to hand at Coilantogle Ford. Twice have I sought Clan Alpine's Glen in peace; but when I come again it shall be as the leader of his foe. I shall never rest, until I stand before the rebel Chieftain and his band."

"Have now thy wish!" He whistled shrill, and the signal flew from crag to crag. In a moment they were surrounded by Vich Alpine's host. On the right, on the left, above, below, through copse and heath, the spear glistened, the bow was bent. That whistle had

garrisoned the glen. With step and weapon forward flung, warriors covered the mountain side.

The mountaineer cast one glance of pride upon his hosts, then turning to his prisoner said :

> " These are Clan Alpine's warriors true,
> And Saxon,—I am Roderick Dhu."

Fitz-James as bravely returned the proud glance, and placing his back against an overhanging rock replied :

> " Come one, come all ! this rock shall fly
> From its firm base as soon as I."

Roderick loved " a foeman worthy of his steel," and at the attitude of his foe, respect was mingled with a surprise amounting to awe. Suddenly he raised his hand, gave a signal, and the troops vanished as mysteriously as they had appeared.

" Fear naught," said the Chief, " thou art my guest until we reach Coilantogle Ford. I would not call a clansman's sword to my aid, were the combat to give me every rood of land stolen by Saxon churls. I wished

merely to show how completely you are at the mercy of Roderick Dhu."

The Chieftain and his companion again strode on in silence. They were in that part of the Trosachs made beautiful by Loch Vennachar, the lowest and most eastern of the three lakes, whose waters sweep through Bochastle moor. Soon they reached the Ford of Coilantogle. Roderick here threw off his plaid and down his targe, saying to the Lowlander:

"Bold Saxon, Vich Alpine has been true to his trust. That murderous Chief, that ruthless wretch, that head of a rebellious clan, hath led thee safe far beyond Clan Alpine's bounds. You stand on Lowland soil, while I am in the land of the enemy, armed like yourself with a single brand,— this is Coilantogle Ford.

"Now man to man, and steel to steel,
That Chieftain's vengeance you must feel."

The Saxon proudly replied:

"Never have I hesitated to draw my blade upon a foe,

and I have sworn to bathe my sword in your blood; yet you have shown fair and generous faith, you have spared my life when surrounded by your warriors. Can naught but blood blot out this feud? Is there no other means?"

"No, stranger, none! To warm your flagging zeal, let me remind you again that the Saxon cause hangs on this combat. As I have said, the Fates when consulted replied through their prophet:

> "Who spills the foremost foeman's life,
> His party conquers in the strife."

"Then, by my word," answered the Saxon, "the riddle is already solved. Far back in the bracken, Red Murdoch lies stark and stiff, slain by my hand. Let us not fight here. Let us go to James, the King, at Stirling Castle, and I pledge my word that he will grant grace and favor. He will restore thee to thy native lands and aid in their defence."

"Coward, because you slew a wretched kern, do you presume to offer the king's protection to Roderick Dhu?

You add fuel to the fire of my burning hatred. I brand thee a vain carpet knight, whose best boast is to wear a tress of lady's hair."

"I thank thee, Roderick, for the taunt. I have sworn by the hand of her you wronged, by the hand of the dying Blanche of Devan, whose husband you murdered, to stain that braid in thy life blood. Now truce, farewell! Now ruth, begone! We will meet hilt to hilt."

Each drew his sword; each threw the scabbard on the turf; each glanced at plain and stream as if looking his last; then with foot, and point, and eye opposed, the Gael and Saxon joined in what proved to be a deadly and unequal combat. Fitz-James had been trained in the use of the sword, which to him was both blade and shield. He knew its every art,— to thrust, to strike, to feint, to guard,— while Roderick, though much the stronger, fared ill. He missed his favorite weapon, the Gaelic targe, and its brazen studs. In wild rage, he showered blow upon blow, but his opponent foiled each attack, and thrice did the Saxon sword draw Gaelic

blood. The gushing stream dyed the Highland tartan, and Roderick felt the fatal drain. The steady skill of the practiced swordsman finally forced his enemy's brand from his grasp and backward bore the Chieftain to the ground.

"Now yield, or the warmest blood of thy body dyes my blade."

"Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy," was the answer.

With one last frantic effort he sprang at Fitz-James's throat, locking his foe in his arms. The desperate arms and hands were like bars of steel, and down fell the foes. The Gael placed his knee on the breast of his enemy and drew a dagger. It gleamed a moment on high, then down came the blow; but faint and dizzy from loss of blood, the Chief, whose brain and eye had never sent an erring blow, missed his mark, and drove the blade into the mountain heath. Fitz-James unwounded felt the relaxing grasp of his dying foe.

Glancing at his victim, and seeing his need of assistance, he blew a bugle blast. Soon faint and afar

were heard hurrying hoofs. The sounds increased and there appeared four mounted squires in Lincoln green. Each held on his course until he drew rein at the bloody spot, and in horror turned to Fitz-James for explanation.

"Exclaim not! Question not! Dismount and bind the wounds of yonder Chief. Let the gray palfrey, which I had hoped would bear a fairer burden, carry him to Stirling Castle. I will dash on before, as I must be present at the Castle at noon, when the archer's games take place. Stand, my noble steed, stand!"

With arching neck, bending head, and quivering ear, as if he loved to be commanded by so royal a master, the beautiful creature obeyed. Springing lightly into the saddle, regardless of stirrup or pommel, the rider sat erect and proud, then like an arrow from a bow, away flew horse and man, along the Teith side, across the Forth, leaving many a town, many a castle behind, until the gray towers, and the town of Stirling, lay before them.

As James dashed up the steep path that led to the Castle, he reined his steed, and looked steadily at a figure, tall and stately, but poorly clad, toiling townward up the rocky way. Calling his squire, DeVaux, to his side the knight asked:

"See you the woodman who with firm and active step climbs the mountain side? Knowest thou who or from whence he is?"

"No, my lord; but he seems one to grace the train of a king, in field or chase."

"DeVaux, that step, that stately form, belongs to one alone. Its like is not seen in all Scotland. It is James of Douglas, uncle of the banished earl. The king must stand upon his guard. If he is to meet a Douglas, it must be when well prepared. Let us turn and enter the castle by the postern."

CHAPTER VIII.

After leaving Goblin's Cave, Douglas had gone to Cambus–Kenneth. Here he made a solemn compact with the Abbess of Cambus that in case of his death the Lady Ellen should be received and made a bride for Heaven. He then bent his steps to Stirling Castle, to surrender himself to the king, and with his own life to ransom that of Malcolm Græme, who was held a prisoner by the king.

Arriving as the burghers were about to begin the sports of the day, Douglas resolved to take part, and to display the old skill that in happier days had called forth the childish wonder, love, and praise of James Fitz-James.

At noon the castle gates stood wide open; the drawbridge rocked, quivered, and echoed to the tread of

horsemen. With his nobles, King James rode through the streets, everywhere meeting with loud huzzas. He doffed his cap, and in saluting ladies bent to the bow of his saddle. Gravely he greeted each city sire, smiled and bowed to the crowd, that rent the air with "Long live the Commons' King, King James!"

All however were not burghers. There were those in the train whose brows were dark and lowering,—nobles who barely restrained their pride, and who despised themselves for forming part of the pageant. Many were nobles held in hostage, chiefs of banished clans, and they sadly thought of their own gray towers and waving woods.

At the Castle Park, the merriment began. There were the Moorish dancers, with bells on their heels, and blades in their hands, wheeling in the mazy sport. Here Robin Hood and all his band,—Friar Tuck with quarterstaff and cowl, old Scathelock, Maid Marion, Scarlet, Mutch, and Little John, who challenged all at archery. The prize, a silver dart, was to be given by

the king's own hand to the successful archer. Douglas entered the lists, sent his first shaft straight to the center, and with his second split the first in twain. Vainly he looked for some mark of recognition from the king, to whom in childhood he had been as a father. Cold and indifferent, the king gave the arrow as he would to the merest stranger, or lowest burgher.

The second test was that of wrestling. The ring was cleared. Two, having vanquished all others, now demanded mightier foes. They called not in vain, for Douglas entered and again was victor. Again the king was bound to award the trophy, a gold ring, and again coldly performed the duty.

In the third contest, the hurling match, Douglas surpassed all others, pitching the rock a rood beyond the mark. The king scornfully tossed him the third prize, a purse of gold. Douglas just as scornfully opened it and tossed the contents to the crowd, that now began to carefully scan this proud victor, dark and gray. Whispers ran from mouth to mouth that it must

be a Douglas. Each sire told his son of feats like this done by James of Douglas, before his exile from his native land. The murmur rose to a clamor, but not a sound came from the king or his followers. Royal eyes disowned him, why then should courtiers endanger themselves. True they knew him well and once called it an honor to follow him in the chase; they had sat at his board, they had found safety under his shield.

The monarch saw the change in the mood of the commoners, and to turn the current of thought let loose a stag which two favorite greyhounds were to bring to bay. The venison was to be served as part of the feast. Lufra, Ellen's favorite greyhound, standing at Douglas's side, darted forth, leaving the royal greyhounds far behind. She was the fleetest hound in all the North, and dashing upon the antlered prey, buried her teeth in its flank. The king's huntsman saw the strange intruder take the prey from the king's hounds, and with his lash struck the noble hound.

Douglas had borne the king's cold look, the scorn of nobles, and the pity of commoners, but to see Lufra beaten, Lufra that Ellen loved, and that had loved and guarded Ellen many a day and night, was more than heart could bear. Dashing forward, with one blow he laid the minion of the king senseless on the ground, as if struck by a hand gauntleted in steel.

Now up rode the noble train brandishing their swords. But loud and clear the warning came, "Back, back, minions, menials, all! Beware the Douglas! King James, near and far have you vainly sought me since a price was set upon my head. I am here,— a willing captive,— here only to crave mercy for my friends."

"You have ill repaid my clemency, presumptuous lord! Of thy proud ambitious clan, thou, James of Bothwell, art the only man my mercy spared. No longer will I bear thy haughty look. What! Ho! Captain of the Guard! Give this offender fitting prisoner's quarters. Break off the sports, disperse the crowd!"

A tumult had arisen, and the yeomen began to bend their bows in defence of Douglas. The horsemen rode into the crowd. The women shrieked, the timid fled, and the hardier urged war at once; but royal spears surrounded Douglas, to bear him to the castle dungeon. This the rabble saw and raised a disordered roar. With grief the last of the line of the Bleeding Heart saw the Commons rise against the law. Turning to the knight who most closely guarded him, Douglas exclaimed:

"Sir John of Hyndford, it was my good sword that dubbed thee Knight; for that deed, allow me a word with these misguided men." Turning, he addressed the mob:

"Good friends, break no bond of fealty for Douglas. My life, my honor, my cause, I freely tender for the good of Scotland. Are her laws so weak that you must measure out justice? If I suffer wrong, am I so selfish, is my sense of public weal so low, that for vengeance I unbind the cords that knit me to my king and to my country? No, it will not soothe me in yonder tower to know that spears have been dyed in blood, wives

made widows, and children fatherless, to avenge my wrong."

With lifted hands and eyes, the throng poured blessings on the defenceless head of him who prized the laws of his country more than his own life. Mothers held their babes on high, that they might see the noble Douglas. Even the rough jailer, with trailing arms and bowed head, followed rather than led the prisoner to his cell.

The offended monarch refused to ride again through the public street, but apart and filled with bitter thoughts sought the castle by a retired path. The fickle mob, now true, now false, could be heard in loud acclaim for James of Bothwell, for Earl of Angus! With like acclaim the vulgar throat had cried for James Fitz-James, when he broke the sway of Douglas. To-morrow the cry would be for Douglas, could they hurl the king from his throne. Listening to the common herd, fierce and frenzied, turning to Lennox his companion, the king exclaimed:

"Oh! many headed monster thing!
Oh! who would wish to be a king?"

At this moment, there appeared in the distance mounted messengers, spurring on their panting steeds. Riding to meet them the king demanded:

"What tidings from the Earl of Mar?"

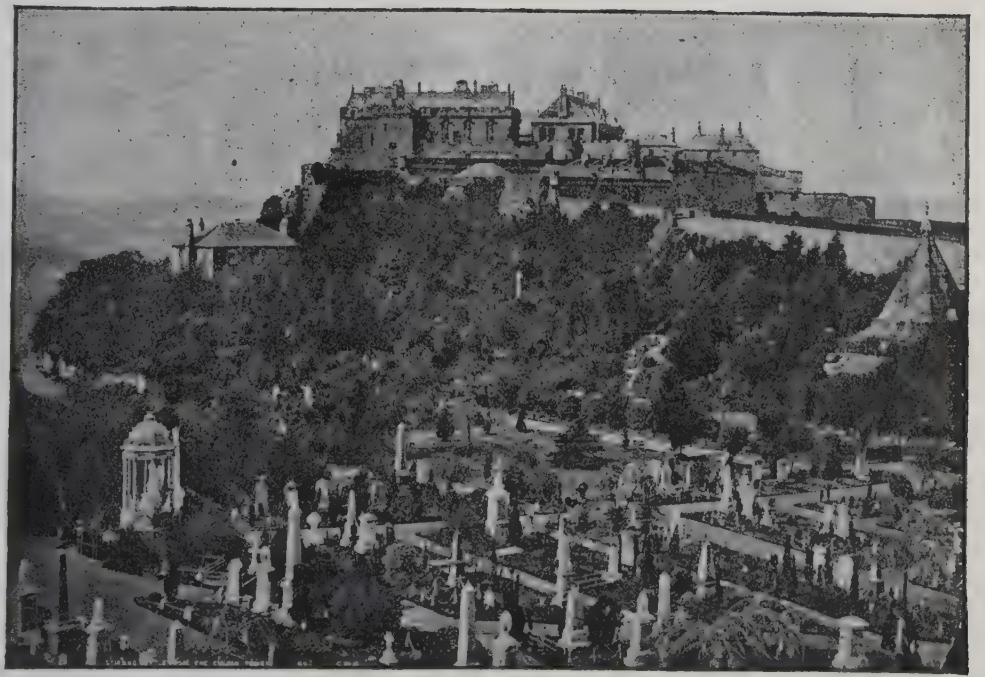
"He prays, my liege, that you will not ride forth from the castle, except with a strong guard. The outlawed Chieftain, Roderick Dhu, has summoned his rebellious clan to march against Stirling Castle. John of Mar is fighting to-day to break up the muster, and long before this, there has been blood spilled in your defence."

"Retrace at once your steps! Ride to the death! Spare not your steed; the best horse in Scotland shall replace it. Say to the Lord of Mar, that the king recalls his men. Roderick Dhu was made prisoner this very morning, and Douglas has given himself up a prisoner. Bear the message! Braco, fly! The commoners must not suffer for my feud, and suffer they will since Roderick, their leader, is lost."

The messenger turned, buried his spurs in the flanks of his courser, and went flying back to the field of battle, while the king returned to his castle.

The gay feast and the lay of the minstrel fitted ill the mood of King James, therefore, upon his return, he dismissed the courtly throng, and retired to his own apartments. Here, alone, he sat lost in sad retrospect.

Upon the town sadness fell; the burghers talked of civil war, of mountain feuds, of Douglas pent in prison walls. Many a sword was drawn, many an oath taken to avenge the wrong of the last of the "Bleeding Heart." As the night passed, horsemen returned bringing tidings of a battle fought between the men of Roderick, and those of King James under the Earl of Mar.



STIRLING CASTLE

CHAPTER IX

At dawn of the next day the towers of Stirling Castle resounded with the soldier's step and the clang of weapons. The hall in which the Court of Guard had passed the night bore evidence of the character of the revellers. As the morning light struggled through the narrow loop-holes, or the barred casement, it fell upon faces made hideous by repeated nights of debauch. Bearded, haggard, and scarred, some sat at the great oaken table still trying to quench their thirst; some spread their hands before the dying embers in the huge chimney; some lay stupid upon the floor. Flowing wine, overturned beakers, armor thrown here and there showed in what manner the night had been spent. Few assembled here were true Scotchmen; none of them felt bound to the king; nearly all were adventurers drawn hither by the love of war.

Those able to do so talked of the battle at Loch Katrine; but at length, all gave way to John of Brent, who demanded more wine and a soldier's song. While yet the ribald glee went on, the warder's challenge was heard. A soldier answered and announced old Bertram of Ghent, accompanied by an aged minstrel and a fair maid. "Bertram, what news?" the hoarse voices demanded, as the Flemish soldier entered.

"I only know that we fought from noon till eve; on both sides lives were lost, and neither can claim success."

"Whence these captives? Whence this glee-maiden and this old harper?

"Get thee an ape and trudge the land,
The leader of a juggler band."

"Shame, comrade. Listen to me; after the battle this minstrel gray and this defenceless maid sought our line, and had audience with the Earl of Mar, who bade me bring them hither quickly and in safety. Forbear your mirth and rudeness. None shall do wrong to either while I am present."

"Listen to his boasting," cried John of Brent. "Ho, comrades, are we to be cowed by an old Flemish dotard?"

Bertram stepped quickly forward, and old Allan-Bane drew his dagger in defence of the lovely Ellen, who until this moment remained muffled in her plaid. At Allan's movement, fearing for his safety, Ellen boldly threw back her veil and stepped forward. The soldiers started amazed,— youthful beauty, womanly dignity, and queenly power held all silent and ashamed.

Proudly she spoke:

"Hear me, soldiers! My father was ever the friend of him who drew sword in defence of the right. He has cheered the camp, led in the march, and bled in battle. To-day he is an exile. Surely, not from the valiant or the strong will danger come to his motherless child, now seeking the king to beg the life of a father."

Brent, ever first in right or wrong, sprang forward and threw down his halberd before her.

"Hear me, mates! I go to call the captain of our

watch. There lies my weapon, and he who steps over it to do the maiden harm will feel my arrow in his heart. No loose speech here, no rough jest. You all know John of Brent."

The captain came at the call. His manner was gay, his mood light, and though controlled by courtesy, Ellen's dark eyes flashed at the familiarity of his words and manner.

"Welcome, fair maid, to the towers of Stirling. You come as errant damosel of old, on white palfrey and attended by aged minstrel. Do you seek Champion, Knight, or Squire?"

After a moment of dignified silence, Ellen replied:

"I have come here through scenes of sorrow and of blood, a suppliant for my father's life. I crave an audience with King James, and as warrant for my request, I present this royal signet, given to me by Fitz-James, and to him by your monarch."

At sight of the ring, the manner and tone of the young man changed as if by magic.

"This ring demands that I ask your pardon! Forgive me, if in word or look I have given offence. A lady-in-waiting shall conduct you to a fitting audience room, and at once the king shall be informed of your presence. Permit me to lead you hence."

Before leaving the room, with the grace and open bounty of her noble family, Ellen turned the gold from her purse and ordered it to be divided among the guard. John of Brent refused the coin, but begged that he might wear the empty silken purse as a favor.

When old Allan-Bane saw his fair charge safe, he turned to the hasty John and said, "Now that my lady is safe, may I beg a favor for myself? May I be permitted to share the doom of my master? I am his minstrel. For ten generations, my ancestors have waked the lyre in his halls. My harp has cheered his board, soothed his infant heir, and followed his dead. Let me, I pray, share his captivity."

"Come, good old minstrel, follow me. You shall go to this lord and chieftain," and John of Brent led the way.

They passed cell after cell, heard the moans of prisoners, the clang of fetters, saw the headsman's axe, the wheel, and many another instrument of death. At length they reached a door the bolt and chain of which was drawn by the burly John, who said:

"Here you may stay till the leech visit the prisoner again. Take this torch and enter."

Roused at the sound of the drawn bolt, the prisoner roused himself, and feebly raised his head. The wondering minstrel looked and beheld, not his master, the noble Douglas,— but Roderick Dhu. As soon as the Chieftain recognized the minstrel, he wildly demanded:

"What of my clan,—my mother,—thy Lady Ellen,—Douglas,—tell me all! Speak,—speak boldly! Who fought bravely? Who fled? Who died nobly?"

"Oh, calm thee, Chief! Thy mother is well,—Ellen is safe. Thy clan never fought more bravely. The stately Pine of Clan Alpine is still unbent, though many a bough has fallen."

Ghastly pale, the Chieftain sat erect.

"Minstrel, describe to me the battle as you saw it, when my Clan met the Saxon. I will listen, and hear in fancy the clang of the sword and the clash of the spear. These gates, these prison bars will vanish, and dying here, my freed soul will burst away, as from the field of battle."

The trembling bard obeyed the command of the dying man, and pictured the battle from onset to finish; but at the words,

> "A herald's voice forbade the war,
> For Bothwell's lord and Roderick bold
> Were both now fast in captive hold,"

the prisoner's eye grew fixed, his hand clenched. Motionless and moanless, Roderick Dhu drew his last breath. When the old harper saw that life had fled, he poured out his sorrow in wailing lament.

Lament.

> "And art thou cold and lowly laid,
> Thy foeman's dread, thy people's aid,

Breadalbane's boast, Clan Alpine's shade !
For thee shall none a requiem say ?
For thee, — who loved the minstrel's lay,
For thee,— of Bothwell's house the stay,
The shelter of her exiled line,
Even in this prison house of thine,
I'll wail for Alpine's honored Pine ! "

" What groans shall yonder valleys fill !
What shrieks of grief shall rend yon hill !
What tears of burning rage shall thrill,
When mourns thy tribe, thy battles done,
Thy fall before the race was won,
Thy sword ungirt ere set of sun !
There breathes no clansman of thy line,
But would have given his life for thine,—
O woe for Alpine's honor'd Pine !

" Sad was thy lot on mortal stage !
The captive thrush may brook the cage,
The prison'd eagle dies for rage.
Brave spirit, do not scorn my strain !
And when its notes awake again,

Even she, so long beloved in vain,
Shall with my harp her voice combine,
And mix her woe and tears with mine,
To wail Clan Alpine's honor'd Pine."

Meanwhile, Ellen all unconscious of what was passing near, her heart bursting with grief, sat alone in a stately hall. The soft sunlight fell through storied panes on richest tapestry. A bountiful collation was spread in vain. The banquet, the gay hall, scarce drew a glance. Her heart was in the lonely isle. She saw in contrast the simple morning meal, her father,—Malcolm Græme, Lufra, and all the joys of free, careless life. But, Hark! What sounds are these! Cautiously Ellen drew near the open window, and listened to a well known voice. The song came softly and sadly from a near prison tower.

SONG.

"My hawk is tired of perch and hood,
My idle greyhound loathes his food,
My horse is weary of his stall,

And I am sick of captive thrall.
I wish I were as I have been,
Hunting the hart in forest green,
With bended bow and bloodhound free,
For that's the life is meet for me.

I hate to learn the ebb of time,
From yon dull steeple's drowsy chime,
Or mark it as the sunbeams crawl,
Inch after inch, along the wall.
The lark was wont my matins ring,
The sable rook my vespers sing.
These towers although a king's they be
Have not a hall of joy for me.

No more at dawning morn I rise
And sun myself in Ellen's eyes,
Drive the fleet deer the forest through,
And homeward wend with evening dew;
A blithesome welcome blithely met
And lay my trophies at her feet,
While fled the eve on wing of glee;
That life is lost to love and me."

Ellen recognized the voice of her lover, Malcolm ; the song of the heart-sick prisoner, was scarce finished when, hearing a light stir, Ellen turned to behold,—the Knight of Snowdoun !

" Oh, welcome, brave Fitz-James ! How may an almost orphan maid repay,—"

" Say not so,—to me you owe no gratitude. It is not mine to give thee the life of thy noble father. I can but be thy guide to the King of Scotland. Come, Ellen, come. It is more than time that we were there. He holds to-day a morning court."

Trembling, she clung to his arm as to that of a brother. Gently he spoke words of hope to cheer her aching heart, and gently led her through hall and gallery, until at his command wide were thrown the broad doors opening into the royal audience room.

The brilliant hall glowed before Ellen's dazzled sight, and the stately knights and queenly dames, sent her gaze drooping to the floor. Closely she still clung to the one friendly arm, then raised her eyes in vain search

for the king,—for him who held in his hand her father's and her lover's life. She scanned each courtly knight, but all stood with bared head. Fitz-James alone wore cap and plume. Amidst robes of velvet and fur, silk and satin, and jewels, he stood in simple Lincoln green,

> "The centre of a glittering ring,
> For Snowdoun's knight is Scotland's King.

Was it possible that she leaned on the arm of her father's enemy!

When the full truth dawned upon her, she sank to the floor.

> "As wreath of snow on mountain breast
> Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
> Poor Ellen glided from her stay
> And at the monarch's feet she lay."

Gently the king drew her again to his side, checked by a glance of disdain the smile about to pass around the court, and gravely kissed her brow. Then addressing her said, to the astonishment of all:

"Yes, fair Lady Ellen Douglas, my foster sister, the poor wandering James Fitz-James is Scotland's King, and he will redeem his signet. You need ask naught for your noble father. Yester eve I calmly heard and judged his case. The death-feud is sealed, and henceforth James of Douglas, Bothwell's Lord, thy father, shall be the friend and bulwark of my throne. Ho! Douglas! Come, confirm my word."

Forth sprang the waiting father, and the daughter was folded in his arms. The sweetest sense of power is known only when employed in making others happy. This joy was the monarch's when he saw the exiled father united to the heart-broken daughter, in the palace of their king. Coming forward, James exclaimed:

"Nay, Douglas, steal not away my fair suppliant! She still holds the little golden talisman, pledge of my faith. Fair Ellen, have you no other favor you would ask of your king?"

Full well Ellen knew that he referred to the imprisoned Græme; but her generous heart would not let

her ask for Malcolm's liberty, while Roderick, friendless and alone, was still under the king's ban, and in sweetest words she begged grace for the Chieftain of Clan Alpine. Gravely he replied:

"I would give my fairest earldom to see that Chieftain live; I have shared his bed, taken bread from his hand, and fought against his sword in mortal combat, but the King of Kings alone can give life to the dead. Hast thou no other boon to crave? Is there no other prisoner to release?"

With tearful eyes Ellen turned and gave the ring to her father, asking him to beg liberty for Malcolm.

"No, — no, —" exclaimed King James, "now the talisman has lost its force, and justice must take its way. Malcolm Græme come forth! Kneel!"

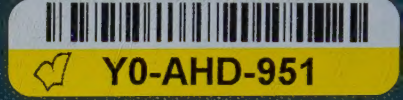
Down dropped the young thane at the feet of his liege and guardian.

"For thee, rash youth, no fair suppliant sues. Nurtured under my smile, you have proved false by concealing in your Clan, James of Douglas, an exile. I

now place you in chain and fetters, and give you into the keeping of a warder."

"A chain of gold the king unstrung,
The links o'er Malcolm's neck he flung,
Then gently drew the glittering band,
And placed the links in Ellen's hand!"

LOCH LOMOND
AND
THE TROSACHS.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